

~~Africa~~ Native convert

1834

How I Found Christ ===== in the ===== Jungles of Africa

The Story of My Conversion



SIMBINI MAMBA NKOMO
Found in Darkest Heathenism
Educated in U. S. A.

**This Book is Dedicated to the Christians
of America**

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
Then said I, here am I, send me. — Isaiah 6:8.

How I Found Christ

in the

Jungles of Africa

I

Dear American Friends:

It has been my desire to tell every American about how I found Christ in the jungles of Africa, but I find this impossible to do, so I have decided to print that part of the story, which I think will reveal to you the power of God to save even a heathen African boy through the ministry of the American missionary.

I belong to one of the Bantu races of South Africa. From my childhood I was taught that there was one God or UNKulunkulu, who created the African only and that he was the God of the Black man and not of the white people. I also learned how to sacrifice and to worship my ancestors. I watched the old men and women giving their alms to the gods of wood and stone. In addition to this, my father gave me instructions in matters of war or military tactics.

At the age of ten, I could not read in my own language or in the English language. I never had seen a church, school-house or Sunday School class and above all, I did not know about Jesus.

AN IGNORANT AFRICAN BOY

II

✕ I was born and reared in a hut.^c The hut had no window, but only a small, narrow door. When I entered the hut I had to crawl on my hands and knees. In the center of the hut was a fireplace. There was no outlet for the smoke except the door. The sheep, goats and chickens all slept in the hut, in a separate section of the room, which was allotted to them by the family. I slept on a mat made from reeds and used my elbow for a pillow or sometimes a log would serve the purpose. There were no chairs in the hut. I took part in all forms of heathen ceremony engaged in by the community. I sang in all the great gatherings of the demons and believed in all their false prophecies concerning the future. I drank the native beer and when drunk, I would quarrel and fight with other boys. Had I been old enough at that time, I would have been compelled to marry several wives, so they could cook and work for me. When I was sick, a witch doctor was called in to see who caused my disease, and he told us that our neighbor sent an evil spirit to bring sickness on me.

I used to set traps in the woods to catch animals, and my brother also set up a trap. Many times I would go into

the woods alone and find an animal in my brother's trap and steal it from him and put it in my own trap. After a while, my brother would come to me and say, "Come, let us go into the woods and see if there are any animals in our traps." I would say, "Good, let us go!" My brother and I would set out for the woods. He would look for his trap and, of course, found no animal in it. Then I would ask him to come and help me with my trap, and see if there was an animal in it. He was always willing to help me, and he never knew that I stole the animals from his trap. Also I would steal food from my mother when I was very hungry, and would tell her that some neighbor took it. I used to get other boys into quarreling with each other and the result was very serious injuries to them and to myself. *I did everything that any African boy did, and never stopped to think whether it was right or wrong. *

III

*The Arrival of the Missionary

One afternoon, when I came home with my cattle, my mother informed me about the strange people who had white faces and wore long bags around their bodies and who said they were going to tell us about a great King. I did my work twice as fast that day as I usually did

and in a short time I told mother that I was ready to go with her. We started for the place and in a few minutes we found ourselves under a big tree. There for the first time, I heard something about Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

The missionary opened his big, black book which I had mistaken for a large, black stone. He read from Mark 10:47, "Jesu Ndodona ka Davida ngi haukele mina"—"Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." He asked us to close our eyes as he prayed. I was afraid that the man was either going to rob or kill us while our eyes were closed and so I refused to comply with his request until my mother placed her hands upon my face. After he said "Amen," he began to tell us that he came from America and that he came over to tell us about Jesus Christ. He said, "God created everybody on the earth, white, black and yellow people and that he wants all His children to come to Him and tell Him that they are sinners and wish Jesus, His Son, to take away their sins.

The missionary, after preaching, left for his station, perhaps never again to return and tell us more about Jesus. I went back to the pastures to take care of the cattle and there I told the boys I knew about Jesus, the King of the White men. I told them about women with long hair. Though I was not a

Christian, yet I had a desire to tell them about the Great King, for he seemed more wonderful than our king.

IV

At the Mission Station

Several months after that, the Spirit of God kept telling me to follow the man who told me about Jesus. I tried to suppress His voice for many weeks but I failed, so I went to the mission station, after promising my people that I would not have anything to do with the European religion, which taught people to be good and to be submissive to every insult. In company with my uncle I set out for the mission house, the lady missionary was very kind to us and invited us to her home and showed us the pictures of Jesus, Moses and other Bible characters. She told us that we should come to school in the morning then come to her house for prayer in the evening, which we did. Before prayer she taught us John 3:16, and then told us more about Jesus. She plainly asked us to accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

It was one of the hardest things for me to do, yet in the end I did it and gave my heart and all to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Then Christ forgave me all my past sins and stubbornness and I was made a new creature in Christ

Jesus. The old burden was taken away and the world seemed to be clothed in brightness and I began to praise God for it.* Praise His Holy Name! Glory to God, it pays to follow Jesus. I saw that my own tribe, which numbered at least one million people, needed God.

V

My First Prayer

One day as I was looking after my sheep, one of them got lost. I did not know just where the baby sheep was. Around me was a very large forest. Since the sheep was my father's, it meant that I would be punished for losing it. I knelt down under a small bushy tree and lifted up my voice and said, "God of the missionaries, they said, if we pray to you, you will answer our prayer." "God, help me to find my sheep." I found the sheep not very far from that spot and how my faith was strengthened, I could not explain. I carried my sheep back home rejoicing in the Lord. Then I began to pray for my own people at home. God answered my prayers, for all my brothers and sisters are Christians today and know how to pray and serve Jesus. Shortly after that my cousin became a Christian. How powerful is the God of the missionaries.

VI

Seeking Higher Education

I attended Mission School for several years. I helped to teach during the week and went out to the kraal to preach or tell my people about Jesus. God blessed me and caused them to leave their heathen form of worship and serve Him. At the same time, I told the Lord that I needed more education in order to teach my people better in the educational, industrial and religious work now taught in the mission field. My father did not want me to go so far away from home to get an education for he thought that I had received sufficient training in the Mission School. I tried to borrow some money from my friends in order to buy a ticket which was to take me to the Adams Seminary, Natal, South Africa, where I intended to begin my studies. However, my friends refused to lend me the money. But I had great desire and determination to go to school, and therefore, I went to a small town to seek employment. I obtained a position for two months at Two Dollars and Fifty Cents a month. From there, I went to Salisbury, Rhodesia, and it was while I was in Rhodesia that I heard of an opportunity to get a position in a gold mine, where I could earn big wages. The trip to this mine cost \$2.50, but I only had \$1.00 in my pocket. In order

to get there, I sold my two shirts and a pair of trousers, which were given to me by my brother, at a very small price. Then I bought my ticket and took the train to the mine, and there I worked hard for six months, and received enough money to enter Adams Seminary, which I did in the fall of 1905. For a period of two years, after the completion of my course in Adams Seminary, I taught school and made enough money to buy my ticket to America. But the way was closed, and I prayed to the Lord to open it, and in 1910, the Lord opened the way for me to come. I landed in America with little or no money to help me to go through school, but I managed to work my way through high school and college. The president and the students were very kind to me in college. Sometimes my pocket-book ran very low and so I cooked my own meals, in order to reduce expenses. For more than three years I cooked for myself. It was a very hard thing to do but I had a great desire to get an education and return home and help the other boys and girls in telling them about Jesus.

VII

My Prayer for Africa

I shall soon complete my studies and have in my possession the secular and religious education necessary for my work as a missionary. I am planning,

if God wills, to return to my native land and teach the African boys and girls the things of God and His power to save them through the blood of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son.

Besides teaching them about Christ, I am going to teach them something about scientific farming, because there is so much land that is not tilled properly. The first thing I want to do is to build a school house right in that part of Africa where a native school house cannot be found. I need money to buy Bibles, books, ploughs and other equipment for the school and so I am sending you this information that you may aid me in the effort, by your prayers and your gifts, that I may, through the aid of the Christians of America, return to my home in Africa with the means necessary to teach the boys and girls who are still living in heathen darkness and superstition, about Christ.

Will YOU help answer this prayer? Many of my prayers have been answered except this one, “**God, provide me with money so that I may return home and build a school house for African boys and girls, and tell them about Jesus.**”

Yours for darkest Africa,

SIMBINI M. NKOMO

TESTIMONIALS

November 1917.

Further information can be secured by writing to Mr. Nkomo, 153 Institute Place, Chicago, Ill.

The Story of My Conversion

COMMITTEE ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS AMONG
FOREIGN STUDENTS

124 East 28th Street, New York,

May 15, 1917.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It has been my pleasure to know Mr. Simbini Nkomo for two years, and I have been much impressed with his earnest purpose to extend Christian education among his own people in Africa. He has taken an active part in our Student Conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and has impressed our American students with his devotion and loyalty to the cause of Christ.

Any courtesy which may be extended to him will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

CHAS. D. HURREY, General Sec'y.

ILLINOIS C. E. UNION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Having reasons for having unusual confidence in the integrity and motives of Mr. Simbini Nkomo, the writer is glad to recommend him to friends of the missionary enterprise. I am sure that any assistance rendered to him and any confidence placed in him will not be amiss. Furthermore, his manifest desire to be of service to his race should entitle him to a careful hearing wherever he goes.

Yours sincerely,

C. E. McBurney, Missionary Supt.

Chicago, Ill.—June 9, 1917.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is a pleasure to speak in hearty commendation of the character and consecration of my friend, Mr. Simbini Nkomo, who has been used of God to witness to the power of Christ to save men. He is dependable and unusually bright.

We speak unhesitatingly to any Christian friends wishing an inspirational message, urging them to hear this brother.

Very truly,

THE ILLINOIS CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION
E. L. Reiner, President.

Chicago, Ill.—June 28, 1917.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT
BOND COUNTY SCHOOLS

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. Simbini Nkomo, a native of Rhodesia, South Africa, has been a student of Greenville College for several years. During this time he has conducted himself in a Christian and gentlemanly manner.

He entered the college while I was an instructor. I had the privilege of testing his qualifications for entering the Preparatory Department. I found he not only had a good knowledge of the fundamentals, but possessed a mind capable of great development. He now graduates from the College of Liberal Arts, having overcome great obstacles. Any favors shown him will be worthily bestowed.

I predict for him a career of usefulness and honor, and shall be disappointed if he does not win a place of honor and distinction among his people to whose interests he has consecrated his talents.

Very sincerely,

WM. E. WHITE, Supt.

Greenville, Ill.—April 28, 1917.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
William H. Kendall, Pastor

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This will introduce to you Mr. Simbini Nkomo, a native Zulu, who came to this country in pursuit of a Christian education. He had been attending Greenville College for a number of years and graduates with the class of 1917.

Mr. Nkomo has won the good will and esteem, not only of the Faculty and the students of Greenville College, but also of the people of Greenville. Many have heard him speak concerning his native land and were very much pleased. He is personally known to me as a strong moral character with splendid intellectual qualifications for so young a man. I take pleasure in recommending him to your confidence and any kindness shown him will not be ill spent.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. KENDALL.

Greenville, Ill.—May 25, 1917.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that Simbini Nkomo has been a successful student in Greenville College for the past seven years. He was a member of the senior class of '17. He is straight-forward and devoted, having in mind to labor among his own people in Africa when his education is completed. He has frequently addressed missionary meetings for our Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and we cordially commend him to anyone wishing such services.

Yours very truly,

MRS. LILY E. HOOD,
Conference President W. F. M. S.—Central
Illinois Conference of the Free Methodist
Church.

MRS. CARRIE T. BURRITT,
Instructor in Missions, Greenville College.

GREENVILLE COLLEGE

Greenville, Ill., May 2, 1917

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. Simbini Nkomo entered Greenville College in 1910. Having completed the Preparatory Course in the spring of 1914, he immediately began work in the College Department. He now graduates from the College of Liberal Arts, having completed the course in three years.

During his stay in Greenville, Mr. Nkomo has conducted himself in a manner which has met the approval of all who knew him. His desire to return to his native land as a missionary has always predominated and the interest which he has shown in religious work has proved that he is sincere in that desire.

Usually, Mr. Nkomo spends a good part of the vacation months in Christian work. The past summer he was one of the speakers in the Christian Endeavor Convention in Southern Illinois. While at Greenville, he has given several lectures which have been of unusual interest.

We feel safe in recommending Mr. Nkomo to any who might have it in their power to favor him in any way.

Very sincerely yours,

HERSCHEL LITHERLAND,
President of Student Organization.

My knowledge of Mr. Simbini Nkomo of South Africa enables me to say that he is an intellectual worthy Christian gentleman. He has and is still exerting all his powers in preparation for his life work—to benefit man and to glorify God.

JOHN H. MARTIN,
Greenville, Ill. Pastor First Baptist Church.

MAYFAIR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Mayfair Congregational Sunday school has agreed to give (\$50.00) fifty dollars yearly to the support of Simbini Nkomo, a native of Africa, to extend the Christian work among his own native people.

We take great delight in doing this, as our brother has won our affections and deepest interest in himself personally, and in his future work.

GEO. J. HABERAR, Supt.

ALFRED J. LEWIS, Pastor.

Chicago, Ill.—March 19, 1918.

Contributors will be kept informed concerning the work by a circular letter.

O. C. BOLMAN,

Minister-Evangelist, Christian Church.

TO THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN EVERYWHERE:
GREETING,

I take pleasure in commending to your confidence and fellowship, Simbini Nkomo, a native of Rhodesia, South Africa. His manner of life and daily conduct, together with his high moral ideals, has won for him the highest esteem of the people of Greenville and highest commendation from the faculty of Greenville College.

Any favors you may show him will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

O. C. BOLMAN.

Greenville, Ill.—June 6, 1917.

FIRST M. E. CHURCH
Rev. C. H. Spragg, Pastor,
Southern Illinois Conference.

This is to say that I am acquainted with the bearer, Simbini Nkomo, of Rhodesia, South Africa. I know of his long and earnest endeavor to secure an education and of his great desire to be able to return to his own people that he might bring to them the good news of the Gospel of the Son of God. I believe he is worthy of your confidence and any and all assistance rendered him will not be misplaced.

Greenville, Ill.

C. H. SPRAGG

AFRICA FOR CHRIST

I, or we gladly subscribe the undermentioned sum to help Christianize, train and direct the unevangelized tribes of Africa through the effort of Simbini Nkomo and others whom God may call to assist him.

\$.....for the term of One Year

\$.....for the term of Two Years

\$.....for the term of Five Years

Payments May Be Made To

CHARLES E. McBURNEY
SUPT. OF MISSIONS, ILLINOIS C. E. UNION
108 N. CLINTON ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

Name

Address.....

Name of Church

Address